

to load, and the Kurdish *ketcliuda*, with his
 horsemen,
 declined to start till an hour after sunrise,
 because he
 could not earlier "tell friends from foes."
 The ground
 was covered with hoar-frost, and the
 feathery foliage of
 the tamarisk was like the finest white coral.

Turning into the mountains, we spent
 nine hours
 in a grand defile, much wooded, where a
 difficult
 path is shut in with the Marbishu torrent.
 The Kurds
 left us at Bani, when two fine fellows became
 our pro-
 tectors as far as a small stream, crossing
 which we
 entered Turkey. At a Kurdish semi-
 subterranean village,
 over which one might ride without knowing it,
 a splen-
 didly-dressed young Khan emerged from
 one of the
 burrows, and said he would give us guards,
 but they
 would not go farther than a certain village,
 where two
 of his men had been killed three days
 before. "There
 is blood between us and them," he said.
 After that, for
 five hours up to Marbishu, the scenery is
 glorious. The
 valley narrows into a picturesque gorge
 between precipi-
 tous mountains, from 2000 to 4000 feet
 above the river,
 on the sides of which a narrow and
 occasionally scaffolded
 path is carried, not always passable for
 laden mules.
 Many grand ravines came down upon this
 gorge, their
 dwarf trees, orange, tawny, and canary-
 yellow, mingled
 with rose-red leafage. The rose bushes are
 covered with
 masses of large carnation-red hips, the
 bramble trailers
 are crimson and gold, the tamarisk is lemon
 - yellow.
 Nature, like the dolphin, is most beautiful in

dying.

The depths were filled with a blue gloom,
the needle-
like peaks which tower above glittered with
new-fallen
snow, the air was fresh and intoxicating—it
was the
romance of travel. But it soon became
apparent that
we were among stern and even perilous
realities. A
notorious robber chief was disposed to bar
our passage.
His men had just robbed a party of
travellers, and were